

California Bay

Umbellularia californica

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau

Shape/Size

Large shrub or tree up to 100 feet tall and wide, rarely grows to these dimensions in Los Angeles County.

Leaves

Long narrow leaves 2 to 5 inches long are quite pungent when crushed.

Flower/Fruit

Minute yellow-green flowers bloom December to May. Fruit is a purple drupe about 1 inch long.

Range

Locally common plant in mountain canyons, often a part of chaparral and oak woodland communities.

Flammability – Moderate.

Maintenance

Recommend removal of dead material and pruning to lift the canopy off the ground.



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes



California Juniper

Juniperus californica

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Large shrub or tree from 5 to 40 feet tall. Generally as a shrub on the desert slopes.

Leaves

Dark green, scale-like leaves.

Flower/Fruit

Colorful blue-gray berry in early spring matures to red-brown in late summer.

Range

Desert slopes up to 5,000 feet.

Flammability – High. Due to presence of flammable resins, dead material buildup and dense vertical structure.

Maintenance

Due to urbanization, this species is being removed in great numbers. All attempts should be made to save these highly valued habitat and soil stabilizing shrubs. Recommend dead wood removal, thinning live growth and lifting canopy off of ground as a mitigation measure.



California Sagebrush, Coastal Sagebrush

Artemisia californica

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau

Shape/Size

Gray woody subshrub grows 2 to 5 feet tall.

Leaves

Narrow to linear gray-green leaves. Characterized by strong aromatic sage odor.

Flowers/Fruit

Inconspicuous green flowers are very tiny (1/8 to 3/16 inch across). Blooms August to December.

Range

Common on exposed coastal slopes from Central California to Baja. Prevalent on inland ranges below 3,000 feet. Much of native range has been displaced due to development.

Flammability – Moderate to High. A high percentage of ether in the leaves coupled with the very small diameter dead and live foliage lead to high fire frequencies.

Maintenance

Recommended removal within the first 0 to 50 feet of any structure. Thinned and spaced from 100 to 200 feet. The plant will not resprout after a fire.



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes



Chamise (Greasewood)

Adenostoma fasciculatum

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Medium to large shrub grows 5 to 12 feet high and 5 to 8 feet wide.

Leaves

Small simple needle-like leaves
¼ to ½ inch long.

Flowers/Fruit

Showy cream colored flowers occur from February to June depending on location. They dry out and become a rusty brown color throughout the summer.

Range

Throughout most of Los Angeles County foothill areas. From the coastal zone to the inland valleys and in some higher desert slope areas.

Flammability – High. Plants contain flammable resins and oils. Low fuel moisture during summer and fall, combined with dead material buildup and fine structure create high fire susceptibility.

Maintenance

Chamise should be removed within the first 0 to 50 feet of any structure. Chamise can be cut to the ground every couple of years and will resprout if roots are left intact.



Chaparral Broom (Coyote Bush)

Baccharis pilularis

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

A prostrate shrub grows 4 to 12 feet high spreading 4 to 8 feet across.

Leaves

Leaves from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long, round with irregular teeth on edges.

Flower/Fruit

Flowers are minute, blooming August to December. Cotton-like seed capsules are quite numerous and unsightly in late fall.

Range

Coastal and intermediate foothills.

Flammability – Low to moderate.

Maintenance

Coyote Bush can develop large amounts of dead material. It should be maintained free of dead material and limbed up off the ground. Resprouts well after cutting.



Photo by John Aimes



Chaparral Currant

Ribes malvaceum

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Deciduous shrub 3 to 6 feet with 5 to 20 straight branches coming from the base. Young twigs are glandular and hairy.

Leaves

3 to 5 lobes $\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches long. Wrinkled green surface with pale green hairy underside.

Flower/Fruit

10 to 25 rose colored blossoms hang in droopy clusters. Blooms December to April. Fruit is a hairy, purplish black berry, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter.

Range

Common foothill shrub of chaparral, oak woodlands, and pine communities below 5,000 feet.

Flammability – Low.

Maintenance

Stump sprouts after fire or cutting. Recommend thinning out live and dead material. Remove vegetation under canopy.



Chaparral Yucca (Our Lord's Candle)

Yucca whipplei

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau

Shape/Size

Stiff leaved rosette growing from a stemless base.

Leaves

1 to 3 feet long ending with a rigid, sharp spine.

Flower/Fruit

Flower stalk from 4 to 8 feet emerges from the center of sprouting base from April to May. Creamy white bell shaped flowers 1 to 1½ inches long. Fruit is a capsule up to 1½ inch long. After fruiting is completed, the entire aerial portion of the plant dies and either regenerates from seed or from rhizomes and stolons beneath the surface.

Range

Common plant of dry slopes in coastal sage scrub, creosote bush, manzanita and chamise chaparral plant communities (1,000-8,000 feet).

Flammability – Low.

Maintenance – Resprouts if lightly burned. After plant dies, remove it.



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes



Coffeeberry

Rhamnus californica

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Shrub 3 to 12 feet tall and wide.

Leaves

Leaves remain year-round. 1 to 3 inches long and 1 inch wide. Dark green above and paler with some hairs and a prominent midvein below.

Flower/Fruit

Flowers are inconspicuous yellow-green umbels no more than 1/8 inch across. Blooms April through June. Fruit is a showy red to black berry about 1/8 inch across.

Range

Can be found in coastal sage and chaparral communities on slopes between 4,000 and 7,000 feet as well as in riparian ravines.

Flammability – Low to moderate depending on available fuel moisture.

Maintenance

Resprouts after fire or cutting from stump. Desirable species for cultural, ornamental, and wildlife value. Recommend doing little other than removal of dead wood and lifting up canopy so that duff and vegetation can be removed from beneath the shrub.

